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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 TOKYO 004466

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [JA](#)

SUBJECT: NEW PRIME MINISTER FUKUDA LEAVES CABINET LARGELY
INTACT

REF: TOKYO 3970

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

Summary

1. (C) Yasuo Fukuda was officially elected Japan's Prime Minister on September 26 and announced his cabinet late the same day. Because the Diet is already in session -- leaving little time to prepare for interpellations -- Fukuda opted to keep 13 of the 17 ministers from former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's last cabinet. Of the four changes, Fukuda moved two Ministers into new positions: Nobutaka Machimura from Foreign Minister to Chief Cabinet Secretary and Masahiko Komura from Defense Minister to Foreign Minister. He also added two new faces: Shigeru Ishiba as Defense Minister and Kisaburo Tokai as Education Minister. Biographic information on Ministers Machimura, Komura, Ishiba, and Tokai, as well as an update on Environment Minister Ichiro Kamoshita and Agriculture Minister Masatoshi Wakabayashi, can be found in paragraphs 4-13. Biographic information on the remaining cabinet members can be found in reftel. End summary.

The Process

2. (C) Yasuo Fukuda became Japan's 30th post-war Prime Minister on September 26. The Lower House overwhelmingly elected Fukuda Prime Minister early in the afternoon, but the opposition-controlled Upper House flexed its newfound muscle by choosing Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Ichiro Ozawa to be PM, which temporarily stalled the proceedings. Japan's Constitution stipulates that the Lower House takes precedence over the Upper House in a prime ministerial vote, but a joint committee of the two houses first tried to resolve the split, pushing the official announcement of Fukuda's election to early evening. The Cabinet announcement

followed shortly thereafter.

13. (C) As many predicted, Fukuda kept predecessor Shinzo Abe's cabinet largely intact to eliminate the need for new Ministers to prepare for Diet deliberations, which will begin on October 1. Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura replaced Kaoru Yosano as Chief Cabinet Secretary, while the Foreign Ministry portfolio went to Defense Minister Masahiko Komura. The Defense Ministry will now be headed by former Defense Minister Shigeru Ishiba. Fukuda asked Abe's Education Minister Bunmei Ibuki to become Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Secretary General, replacing Taro Aso who declined a cabinet seat. The new Education Minister is Kisaburo Tokai.

Biographies

14. (C) Minister of Foreign Affairs) Masahiko KOMURA, 65, is a ninth term member of the Lower House representing Yamaguchi first district, first elected in 1980. Komura, who heads his own 16-person faction, is considered a heavyweight within the party and will offer a strong defense against DPJ arguments against renewing the Anti-Terrorism bill. Komura served as Foreign Minister in the Obuchi cabinet and in the first Mori cabinet, where he was instrumental in securing Diet support for the revised U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines and Special Action Committee for Okinawa (SACO) agreement. Komura also played host to the 2000 G-8 Foreign Ministerial in Miyazaki. In 2003, Komura was Chairman of the Lower House Special Committee on Anti-Terrorism, overseeing the extension of Japan's maritime mission in support of OEF. Although considered a hardliner on North Korea, Komura has a

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relatively dovish reputation. He currently serves as President of the Japan-China Diet Members League. Overall, Komura has a reputation as a clean and capable, if somewhat colorless, politician. Komura practices Shorinjo Kempo, a type of Kung-fu. He speaks little English.

15. (C) Chief Cabinet Secretary -- Nobutaka MACHIMURA, 63, is an eighth term member of the Lower House representing Hokkaido's fifth district, first elected in 1983. The head of his own faction, Machimura is well known to his U.S. counterparts, having served as Foreign Minister in the second and third Koizumi Cabinets. Machimura wields considerable political clout, and his ties to former PM Koizumi and senior members of the Prime Minister's former faction (previously Mori, now Machimura faction) have played a key role in his career development. In addition to his stints as Foreign Minister, he has held a number of positions since his election to the lower house in 1983, including Deputy LDP Secretary General (2002), Minister of Education (2000-01),

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Special Advisor to former Prime Minister Mori (2000), and Parliamentary Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs (1998-99). He also has served as the LDP's Research Commission on Foreign Affairs Chairman.

16. (C) As Foreign Minister, Machimura earned the admiration and respect of U.S. officials in Tokyo and Washington, DC. Described as intelligent and personable, Machimura is an excellent public speaker. During his tenure (2004-05), he underscored the need to improve relations with Japan's neighbors, but was unable to break the impasse over history and territorial disputes. Machimura is a longtime supporter of the bilateral alliance and in 2001 he strongly supported Japanese assistance to the U.S. fight against terrorism. He has led efforts within the LDP to strengthen the protection of intelligence. He can be expected to play a leadership role in bilateral information security efforts. Machimura was also personally involved during critical stages of the Alliance Transformation negotiations, representing MOFA at the February 19 and October 29, 2006 Security Consultative Committee (2 2) meetings. Nevertheless, Machimura has made a

number of public statements suggesting a need to reduce Japan's outlays of Host Nation Support (HNS). As such, he may not be a natural ally in upcoming discussions on renewal of the Special Measures Agreement (SMA).

17. (C) Machimura's late father was a prominent upper house president and three-time governor of Hokkaido. After graduating from University of Tokyo's Economic Faculty, Machimura pursued a career at the Ministry of International Trade and Industry from 1969 to 1982. He spent his sophomore year in college as an exchange student at Wesleyan University in Connecticut. Machimura jogs regularly and plays tennis and golf. He and his wife Junko have two daughters. He speaks excellent English.

18. (C) Minister of Defense -- Shigeru ISHIBA, 50, is a seventh term member of the Lower House representing Tottori's first district, first elected in 1986. A member of the Tsushima faction, he is a well regarded expert on security

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and defense issues, with a detailed knowledge of weapons systems. He was critical of the Abe administration for not handling the extension of the Anti-Terrorism law earlier and has admitted publicly that the law cannot be extended before it expires on November 1. Ishiba served as Director General of the Defense Agency during 2002-04 under then Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and as its Deputy Director General.

19. (C) Minister for Education, Sports, Culture, Science and Technology (MEXT)) Kisaburo TOKAI, 59, is a six-term member of the Lower House representing Hyogo Prefecture's tenth

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district. A member of the Yamasaki faction, he is the only cabinet minister who has not served in a previous cabinet, but he has served as Senior Vice Minister for the Ministry of Education under Prime Minister Koizumi and as Parliamentary Vice Minister for Science and Technology under Prime Minister Mori. Tokai has an extensive science policy background and could be more engaged on S&T issues than his predecessors. He also has been Chairman of the Research Commission to Promote Research and Establish a Nation of Innovative Science and Technology since 2005 and an advisor to the LDP study group on peaceful uses of space since 2006. He was named acting chairman of the LDP's Policy Research Council in August 2007.

110. (C) Born in Hyogo prefecture in 1948, Tokai is the son of former Minister of Construction and Minister of Home Affairs Motosaburo Tokai. The younger Tokai graduated from Waseda University's Department of Science and Technology, a prestigious private university in Tokyo that has produced many politicians. He holds a first-class architect's license and first worked for the design powerhouse Nikken Sekkei, but left the company in 1985 to become former Foreign Minister Shintaro Abe's secretary. After Tokai's father passed away, the son ran for the family seat in Hyogo in 1986 as a member of the LDP, but left in 1993 to join the Sakigake Party. After losing his bid for reelection in 1996, he returned to the LDP. Tokai is married with two daughters and enjoys movies, reading and tending his vegetable garden.

111. (C) Minister for Environment -- Dr. Ichiro KAMOSHITA, 58, kept his position at the Ministry of Environment (MOE) despite his involvement in minor scandals soon after being appointed in former Prime Minister Abe's August 27 cabinet reshuffle. Kamoshita made the news in early September for having failed to report loans made to his fund management organization and for the discovery of unsigned receipts for political expenses. We have seen no change in the last month in the diminished influence MOE has had on Japan's climate policy. A local reporter told an EST officer recently that MOE officials complained to him about difficulties getting their views heard on Japan's climate policy.

¶12. (C) Minister of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries -- Masatoshi WAKABAYASHI, 73, is a second-term member of the House of Councilors representing Nagano. He was first elected to the Japanese House of Representatives from Nagano in 1983 and served three terms before being elected to the House of Councilors in 1998 and again in 2004. He is a member of the LDP's Mori faction and served in former Prime Minister Abe's two Cabinets. In the first Cabinet, Wakabayashi served as Environment Minister, but was asked by Abe to add the Agriculture portfolio to his duties in August 2007 when Norihiko Akagi abruptly resigned because of a financial scandal. In Abe's second cabinet Takehiko Endo also resigned suddenly after only eight days over a similar scandal and Wakabayashi became Agriculture Minister.

¶13. (C) A former Ministry bureaucrat, Wakabayashi is very knowledgeable about agricultural policy and is expected to guide the Ministry with a steady hand, although he lacks the enthusiasm of late Agricultural Minister Toshikatsu Matsuoka.

Some Ministry bureaucrats have also expressed concern over Wakabayashi's effectiveness in DOHA negotiations because of his age; occasionally these talks continue throughout the night. Wakabayashi also served as Senior Vice Minister of Finance in the Koizumi and the Mori administrations. As Vice Minister, Wakabayashi represented Japan at international meetings of development organizations such as the African Development Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Wakabayashi graduated from Tokyo University

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Faculty of Law in 1957. Prior to becoming a politician he served at the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries for 26 years. He told the press in 1990 that he hesitated to run for government because he had no other family members in politics but he was encouraged by a friend to run for that very reason. Wakabayashi has published three books on agricultural and technological policy. His favorite sport is judo. He is married and his wife serves as his secretary, keeping a very tight rein on his schedule. There is no indication that he speaks English.
Schieffer